

Boston, 21 Cornhill, April 17, 1858.

Dear Mary Estlin;

I hoped to be able to send you some reply to your inquiries about Rev. H. W. Beecher & Mrs. Stowe by last week's steamship; but I only received the information I had requested on the subject 2 days since. Whether it is, now I have got it, worth much, you can decide. I send you a copy of O. Johnson's note to me on the subject. Johnson was formerly a member of old Dr. Beecher's church in Boston, and has always felt a warm personal regard for him & for some members of his family, & especially for H. W. Beecher. I think I could not have applied to ^{any} ~~any~~ man who would answer your inquiries about H. W. B. ~~& Mrs.~~ more carefully & fairly than Mr. Johnson. About Mrs. Stowe, he says nothing, but I think her position towards the Board of Missions is not any less friendly than her brother's. - I have heard of her expressing great ~~sad~~ regret about Dr. Nehemiah Adams's book "the South Side View of Slavery" - especially when as he [the author] was such a "dear good Christian"; - but for this I cannot vouch, and it had better not be mentioned perhaps. It is evident, from O. J.'s note, that Mr. Beecher's position is an equivocal one. The Board of Missions regards the Andⁿ. Miss. Society as a rival, & as an insidious foe in fact, and they will regard H. W. Beecher's favour shown to the latter as an act of injury & hostility even to them; but while he consents ^{to} & allows a collection to be taken up in his congregation annually in their behalf, they will keep refrain from any public quarrel with him, & only curse him (if such "good Christians" as they can be possibly supposed to do such a thing) between their teeth. I think, too, that H. W. B. & Mrs. Stowe have not the courage, even supposing they had the will, to come out in opposition to the A. T. B. C. F. M. Beecher would lose even his congregation entirely, lose his place with his "brethren" - his position in his denomination & among the churches - be driven to take ~~the~~ ^a wholly outside & comparatively solitary position. There is something quite unmanly about his present position, which you can see as clearly as we. He cannot defend it, and he will be in no hurry to try.

You will see that I got your communication on the subject into the "Standard" and "Liberator." Anne Weston told me she would write, herself, to Mr. Stowe, but whether she has done so, or not, I have not heard. We feel thankful to you, and to the Edinburgh ladies, for the star you have made about this matter - for the exposure of that Cuthbert Young, who seems a very snake, and even another Scoble. It cannot fail to do good.

We hear from sundry quarters of the great probability there is of a Revolution in England - a social revolution, not (probably) a bloody one. Joseph Barker, who has just returned to this country, talks in this way, I understand. His authority will not, I presume, be very weighty with you. I do not give much ear or credit to these stories, for there has been so much wisdom in the counsels of your Government - for the past generation at least - that these coming storms have been foreseen and averted by timely measures. But I have felt, for many years, even before I went to England that your State Church, with its enormous & absurd monopolies, ought to be abolished. Now it seems absolutely indispensable that the Aristocracy - the Nobility - should also be abolished, and every man stand upon his own character, merits, & abilities. I do not at all expect, as one man (a German) told me the other day, that "Victoria will have to pay a visit to these shores very soon"! - but I do hope, & expect, to see material & radical changes introduced into the structure of your Government ere long. This war with Russia must prove exceedingly burdensome to the English people, and they will, I think, exact a severe reckoning of the men who have brought them into it, and then done so little to uphold the British honour, or secure the ends which were desired, in carrying it on. —

Meanwhile, one Government, never foreseeing the triumph of the Right, never desiring or meaning to yield in even so partial a measure to its demands,

never aiming to secure the ends of Justice
or of Freedom, is plotting & scheming, by every
insidious and treacherous art, to possess itself of
the Island of Cuba. ~~that~~ That attained, they will,
after securing their victory, prepare their plans for
seizing Hayti. Doubtless they look forward to seizing
Jamaica, and the whole W. India group, as
necessary to their plan of spreading slavery throughout
the American tropics. They are driving forward
now, with all the industry ^{& craft} they can, to secure the
possession of Cuba, while England & France have their
hands full of this Russian War; and they are
secretly fomenting difficulties in Cuba, and inviting
insult to American citizens for the purpose of resenting
them, in order that they may have some ground for
a war with Spain, and a seizure of the island. —
So will see how much reason the American
abolitionists have, apart from general grounds, to
desire the end of this European war.

A letter from R.D. Webb, rec'd. this morning, speaks
of your father's health as not quite so good. — My
time forbids my writing any more now, so I give
you my best thanks for your letter, & for all
your labours of love, — my sincere respects to your
dear father & my regards to Messrs. James, Armstrong,
to the Carpenter, &c. And am,
Very truly Yours
Samuel May Jr.

I never have learned precisely what was the
matter with Mr. James — Some injury, I was told.
My wife and chd. are both in Boston — my
wife's health is improving. She has been a great
sufferer from the filling a tooth too near the nerve.

